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Labor INFORMATION BULLETIN

VOLUME V NUMBER 6

JUNE
1938

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS · WASHINGTON

Labor INFORMATION BULLETIN

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CONTENTS FOR JUNE 1938

URBAN HOUSING CONDITIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, by R. H. Britten . 1

COST OF LIVING IN MARCH 1938 4

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN THE AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY, by W. L. Munger 5

ACTIVITIES OF RETAIL COOPERATIVES IN 1936, by Florence E. Parker . 9

INDUSTRIAL INJURIES AND BUSINESS CONDITIONS, by M. D. Kossoris . . 12

EMPLOYMENT AND PAY ROLLS IN APRIL 1938 14

BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN APRIL 1938 19

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT AND RELIEF IN APRIL 1938 20

WHAT HAPPENED TO PRICES IN APRIL 1938 21

URBAN HOUSING CONDITIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

BY
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UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

It might be expected that modern living would guarantee at least one room to each person and an inside "flush" toilet for each family. Such is not the case, according to the National Health Survey conducted in 83 typical cities by the United States Public Health Service in 1935-36. Instead the survey estimates that three million urban families in the United States have more than one person per room; one million families live in dwellings with more than one and one-half times as many persons as there are rooms; and seven hundred thousand families live in dwellings with at least twice as many persons as there are rooms. About one out of every eight households studied had no inside "flush" toilet, or, if such facility was available, it was used jointly with other families.

CROWDED LIVING QUARTERS

In its National Health Survey the United States Public Health Service uses persons per room as an index of overcrowding. A kitchen is counted as a room but baths, basements, and attics not used for living quarters are excluded. Thus, a family of four living in a house consisting of a kitchen, living room, and two bedrooms would be classified as a household of one person per room. If, however, six or eight persons were to live in the same house, the household would be classified as having one and one-half or two persons per room.

Housing conditions in the 83 cities covered by the survey varied widely. In one city 40 percent of the households covered had more than one person per room, while in another city less than 3 percent of the families had more than one person per room. Again, in one city 16 percent of the families studied occupied dwellings with more than two persons per room, while in another city only one-tenth of 1 percent of the families covered lived in houses with more than two persons per room.

For the 83 cities combined, it was found that 16 out of every 100 urban families lived in dwellings with more than one person per room and 6 out of every 100 households had more than one and one-half times as many inhabitants as rooms.

Cities in the West suffered the least from family overcrowding. In this section of the country about 10 percent of the urban families had more than one person per room, as against about 15 percent in the Eastern and Central States, and 25 percent in the South.

Overcrowding was not confined to cities of any particular size. It prevailed in small cities, as well as in those with a population of 500,000 or more. In the Central region overcrowding among families in small cities was almost as great as in the large cities, while in the West cities with a population of less than 25,000 averaged a slightly greater degree of overcrowding than the larger cities in this area. In the South overcrowding was greatest in the smaller cities.

The greatest degree of overcrowding was found among the colored population, especially in southern cities. Thirty-seven percent of the colored families studied lived in quarters with more than one person per room. About 20 percent of the white families in the South lived under similar conditions. In the West, 31 percent of all the colored families surveyed, which also included a large number of Mexican, Japanese, and Chinese families, lived in houses with more than one person per room. In the East and Central sections of the United States the overcrowding among families of the colored population was less pronounced than in the South and West.

In all cities, however, families with comparatively high incomes were able to secure adequate housing. The low income groups, on the other hand, especially among the colored population, lived in houses which were inadequate often to such a degree as to become a menace to the health of the family and the community.

EXTENT OF OVERCROWDING IN WHITE AND COLORED FAMILIES

AREA AND COLOR		Percent of families averaging--		
		More than one person per room	More than one and one-half persons per room	Two or more persons per room
East	White	14.3	3.7	1.7
	Colored	20.8	8.0	4.7
South	White	19.8	8.3	5.8
	Colored	37.1	21.2	16.0
Central	White	14.7	5.0	3.3
	Colored	26.5	12.9	9.0
West	White	9.4	3.0	2.0
	Colored	30.9	15.0	9.7

About 1 out of every 14 families with annual incomes of $2,000 or over were found in houses with more than one person per room. Similar overcrowded conditions were found in every sixth household among families with incomes of less than $1,000 a year and in every third household of families on relief. Every tenth family on relief reported at least twice as many persons under the family roof as there were rooms in the home.

Commenting on the effect of income on adequate housing, the National Health Survey states:

"What income is necessary under present conditions to provide decent housing, adequate nutrition, sufficient clothing, proper medical care, is debatable; but it is evident...that a large proportion of the population of this country are not receiving incomes adequate to insure a suitable standard of living."

INADEQUATE SANITARY FACILITIES

As might be expected, the National Health Survey found a larger proportion of substandard sanitary facilities in small cities. In the larger cities the households which lack inside "flush" toilets frequently have toilets located in hallways and used by two or more families. In the smaller cities the privy was generally found in households lacking "flush" toilets. In the South climatic conditions permit the use of outside "flush" toilets which are seldom found in the North.

Thirteen percent of all the families surveyed reported either the absence of inside "flush" toilets, or that such facilities were used jointly with other families. In the East, 1 out of every 13 families either did not have inside "flush" toilets, or if they did, they were shared with other households. This situation prevailed for 1 out of every 10 families in the West, 1 out of every 8 families in the Central States, and for about 1 out of every 4 families in the South.

Toilet facilities were least satisfactory, as judged by this standard, in the smaller cities in all sections of the country. Out of every 100 families surveyed in cities under 25,000 population 17 in the East, 28 in the Central States, 15 in the West, and 41 in the South did not have adequate toilet facilities. On the other hand, in the cities with population of half a million or more, inadequate toilet facilities were found

Eating and Living in the Kitchen

for about 5 out of every 100 families in the West, as against 7 in the East and 10 in the Central region.

Practically all families in the higher income groups, regardless of the size and location of the city, had inside "flush" toilets which were not shared with other households. Relief and low income families, on the other hand, frequently shared a hallway toilet or an outside privy. Sanitary facilities of the colored population also varied widely, depending upon the section of the country and the size of the city. In one city 98 percent of the colored households had inside "flush" toilets not shared by others, while in another city no colored family had such individual facilities.

The housing information collected in the Health Survey of the United States Public Health Service was confined exclusively to the problem of overcrowding and to the adequacy of toilet facilities. It did not take into account the many other aspects of deficient housing, such as the use of one room as a combined kitchen, dining room, living room, and bathroom. Congestion in halls and on the streets, lack of adequate ventilation, absence of sunlight, insufficient natural or artificial illumination, dilapidation of buildings, and fire and other hazards were not recorded. The Public Health Service indicated, however, the close relationship of these factors to accidents, infectious diseases, and normal growth of children.

Overcrowding is Greatest in the Slums

Cost of Living in March 1938

Food costs, the largest single item in the workingman's budget, declined nearly 5 percent during the 3-month period December 15, 1937 to March 15, 1938. All 32 cities regularly surveyed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported lower food prices in March. In five cities — New York, Atlanta, Birmingham, Boston, and Chicago — the drop exceeded 5 percent. The decline in meat prices which began in September and continued through February was the greatest factor in the reduction of food costs.

The average cost of clothing declined 1.4 percent over the 3-month interval. All cities, with the exception of Philadelphia, which recently imposed a sales tax reported lower prices for clothing.

Rents averaged slightly higher in March than in December. Fuel and light costs for the 32 cities combined also registered a slight increase over the 3-month interval.

CHANGES IN THE COST OF LIVING IN 15 SELECTED CITIES

AREA AND CITY	PERCENTAGE INCREASE (+) OR DECREASE (-)				
	December 15, 1937 to March 15, 1938	March 15, 1937 to March 15, 1938	June 1933 to March 15, 1938	December 1929 to March 15, 1938	1923-25 Average to March 15, 1938
Average for 32 large cities	- 1.8	- 0.9	+11.4	-16.7	-17.0
NORTH ATLANTIC:					
Boston	- 2.5	- 2.1	+ 7.6	- 1.8	-18.7
New York	- 2.8	- 1.3	+ 7.6	-17.2	-16.0
Portland, Me.	- 1.6	- 1.9	+ 8.1	-15.4	-15.0
SOUTH ATLANTIC:					
Atlanta	- 2.2	- 2.3	+12.9	-17.4	-19.5
Baltimore	- 1.5	- 0.7	+11.1	-14.1	-13.7
Jacksonville	- 2.4	- 1.8	+12.3	-16.8	-20.0
NORTH CENTRAL:					
Chicago	- 1.7	- 0.7	+12.3	-20.3	-20.6
Detroit	- 1.6	+ 1.3	+24.7	-15.4	-18.1
St. Louis	- 1.5	- 1.5	+11.1	-17.8	-16.5
SOUTH CENTRAL:					
Birmingham	- 1.8	- 1.5	+15.4	-19.3	-22.4
Houston	- 1.5	- 0.7	+15.4	-16.2	-17.4
New Orleans	- 0.6	- 0.1	+11.3	-15.2	-16.1
WESTERN:					
Denver	- 1.6	- 1.2	+12.8	-13.1	-16.0
San Francisco	- 1.6	+ 1.2	+11.8	-12.4	-12.2
Seattle	- 1.0	+ 0.3	+12.1	-12.1	-12.4

On the whole, the cost of living of families of wage earners and lower-salaried workers declined 1.8 percent between December 15, 1937 and March 15, 1938. Living costs in the 32 cities covered averaged on March 15 about 1 percent lower than in March a year ago and nearly 17 percent lower than in December 1929. They were about 11 percent higher than at the low point in June 1933.

Off the Line Ready for the Road

Collective Bargaining in the Automobile Industry

William L. Munger, Research Director
United Automobile Workers of America

Few industries have experienced as dramatic a rise of unionization and collective bargaining as the automobile industry. Almost overnight the great mass of automobile workers who never belonged to a trade-union was confronted with all the problems and difficulties that collective bargaining in a highly complicated industry presents. It is true that a handful of plants in outlying automobile centers had written contracts with their employees. Their experience, however, was too inadequate to serve as a pattern for the hundreds of written contracts which were signed by the United Automobile Workers' Union during the last 2 years.

Without precedents to follow, the United Automobile Workers of America had to blaze a new trail in collective bargaining. Although efforts were made to make contracts with various companies as uniform as possible, the fact that so many agreements were negotiated simultaneously resulted inevitably in a certain amount of variation. There was no time available for the union to compare the separate contracts to determine precisely what form of agreement would be most satisfactory to solve a particular problem.

If the union in the automobile industry had no precedents to follow, neither did the employers. There had been no cases in American history before where a huge corporation such as General Motors or Chrysler had dealt with a labor organization on a national basis through a written contract. In addition, both parties suffered from the handicap of operating in a territory and in an industry that had been traditionally opposed to unionism and to collective bargaining.

The intense period of organization, accompanied by a series of strikes in the plants of several large automobile corporations, was not conducive to such constructive work as was necessary for establishing harmonious relations between employers and employees. The situation continued tense even after the strikes ended and agreements had been signed between the union and employers. It was only after both sides came to the realization that neither party could hope to conduct an indefinite warfare that the way was cleared for the more constructive stage of collective bargaining in the industry.

In many ways this constructive phase of collective bargaining is even more difficult than the first stage of organization work, as it requires stability and intelligence both on the part of the union and the employers. Direct demands had to give way to a discussion of objectives, the organization of grievance and bargaining committees, and regular conferences between the union representatives and management for the purpose of developing a set of relations mutually satisfactory to the employers and workers.

The automobile industry is a highly coordinated and complicated mechanism and the problem of collective bargaining in the industry is vastly different from collective bargaining in the building trades, for example, or in other less highly developed industries. In view of these facts, successful collective bargaining necessitated that labor be thoroughly familiar with the intricacies involved in the processes of manufacture and understand more and more how the industry is operated.

The local union's bargaining committee must be acquainted with conditions and operations in their plant and its relations to other plants. In order to negotiate properly, they must be fully equipped with accurate information of the financial structure of the company, its competitive position, its manufacturing policies, the relative obsolescence of the machinery in use, and other factors which enter as important elements in negotiations.

On the other hand, the employers are no longer in a position to pursue their policies and to operate their plants oblivious of the workers and their attitude to these policies. Management had to learn that efficiency of operation is not purely an engineering problem but that it must take into consideration the health and welfare of the workers affected. As a result, most of the larger corporations have completely revised their personnel policies and many have set up special departments of industrial relations devoted entirely to the problem of relations with organized labor.

Working on Dies Requires Great Skill

GRIEVANCE MACHINERY

As collective bargaining becomes an accepted fact, the employers' or the unions' "demands" become less prominent, except perhaps when an agreement is about to be renewed. Even at that time the new demands usually deal with improvements in the existing agreement rather than with drastic

departures. The most important function of collective bargaining is to settle and remove the thousands of minor grievances or misunderstandings which arise from the daily routine of employer-employee relationship and which, if allowed to persist, may give rise to serious difficulties.

TYPE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROVIDED IN 537 U.A.W.A. AGREEMENTS

ESTABLISHMENT	Agreements for--		
	MEMBERS ONLY	SOLE BARGAINING	CLOSED SHOP
Assembly plants...	31	5	1
Auto parts.....	275	98	56
Auto dealers.....	5	5	2
Garages.....	4	4	4
Aircraft.....	5	*None*	*None*
Farm implements...	4	2	*None*
Miscellaneous.....	19	14	3

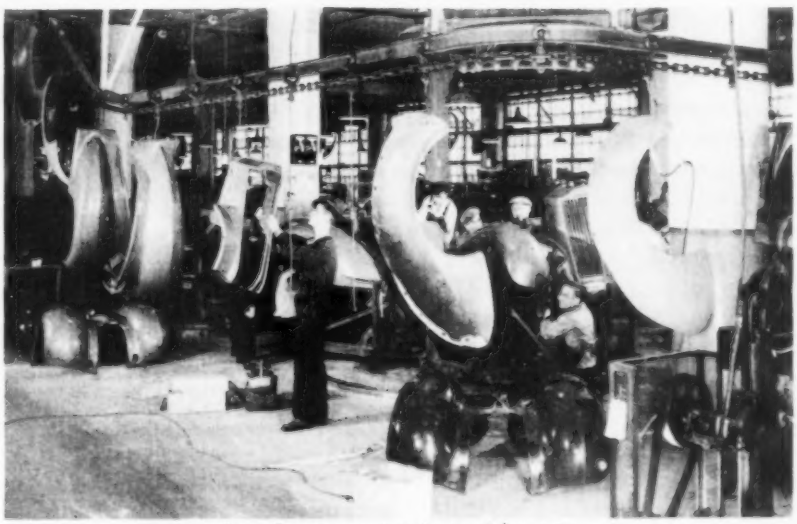
To deal with these important problems, the automobile industry now has two general types of grievance machinery: The committee system and the shop-steward system. The grievance committee is the more common and consists of from 5 to 10 workers, each of whom represents a section of the plant, meeting periodically with the management to iron out all the grievances that accumulate between sessions. The other common type of grievance machinery is the shop-steward system, whereby a shop steward of a given department handles grievances directly with the foreman of the department. A steward's territory is usually either a single department or a section of a department employing anywhere from 15 to 100 workers.

The United Automobile Workers' Union regards the shop-steward system as by far the most efficient and thorough method of handling grievances. The shop steward deals with only one supervisor or foreman to whom he has ready access and is therefore in a position to dispose of a grievance almost as rapidly as it arises. It also enables the union to have a more direct contact with the workers in the shops and thus to be more familiar with their problems than is possible under the committee system.

The purpose of collective bargaining is, however, not so much to set up a court where grievances may be studied and adjusted as to eliminate the causes of such grievances and thus establish lasting peaceful relations between the union and the company. Where management and the union have recognized this basic principle of collective bargaining, no serious difficulties have arisen between employers and workers.

KEEPING AGREEMENTS

Closely related to collective bargaining is the responsibility placed on both sides of keeping agreements. Neither management nor the Automobile Workers' Union can claim immunity from charges of violation of agreements in the



Conveying Fenders to Assembly Line

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automobile industry. Considerable work will have to be done by both sides to prepare the ground for the elimination of such practices in the future. On the union side this can be accomplished only through educating and training the leaders,

MAJOR PROVISIONS OF 501 U.A.W.A. AGREEMENTS

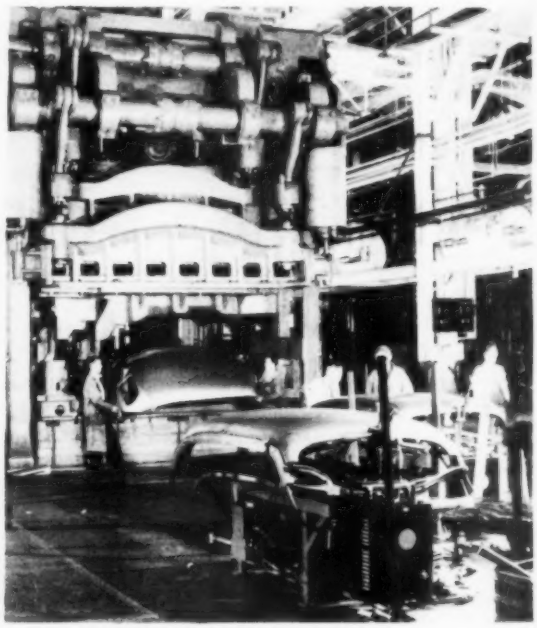
PROVISION	NUMBER OF AGREEMENTS
Time and one-half to double time for Sundays and holidays.....	439
Time and one-half for overtime...	436
Seniority clause.....	412
Grievance committee.....	375
Maximum workweek of 40 hours.....	342
Stewards and committeemen heading seniority list.....	186
One to 4 hours pay when sent home for lack of work after reporting	178
Shop-steward system.....	147
No-lockout and no-strike clause..	130
Vacations with pay.....	93
Extra bonus for night shift.....	76
Strike permitted after grievance machinery has failed.....	70
First aid and sanitary conditions	57
Use of bulletin boards by union..	49
Rest periods for women.....	31

particularly in the local unions, to the responsibilities which go with their jobs. Raw, inexperienced workers cannot be expected suddenly to acquire overnight all the virtues which go with long experience in collective bargaining.

Employers also must realize that the contract should be entered into in good faith and should not be used as a club against the union. When unions are dealt with openly and frankly so that they can feel free from sudden attacks on their very existence, they can and will devote more time to this type of educational work for proper leadership.

No one wants responsibility more than the unions. No sane trade-union leader relishes the charge of irresponsibility and no union leader can underestimate the harm done to the cause of unionism in the public eye through irresponsible acts. But the task of the union is much more difficult than that of the employer. The union has more people to deal with than the employers. Management has strict control over its personnel and can enforce its rules and regulations through the threat of discharge. The union must rely almost exclusively upon moral suasion and education.

As the experience of the union grows and precedents in collective bargaining are established, the problems arising from minor grievances, from unauthorized strikes, or from violations of contracts will arise less frequently and will be easier to deal with. Steps are already being taken to make available to union locals, to committeemen, and to shop stewards the experience



Pressing All-steel Tops

of other locals and other plants in dealing with the question of labor relations. In this manner leadership of the local, the shop stewards, and the committeemen will be better trained and will be in a better position to maintain good relations between the employers and the workers.

Activities of Retail Cooperatives in 1936

Florence E. Parker
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Nearly $182,700,000 worth of groceries, meats, general merchandise, bakery and creamery products, gasoline and oil, and other goods and services were sold through approximately 3,600 retail cooperative associations with a membership of about 678,000 in 1936. These estimates are based on a comprehensive survey of the retail cooperative movement in 1936 made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Products Handled. The retail cooperative associations operating in 1936 covered a broader field of activity and offered a wider range of products to their members than the cooperatives active at the time of the Bureau's previous survey in 1933. The outstanding development in recent years has been the marked expansion of petroleum associations. These cooperatives have greatly increased both in number and in the variety of products handled. In 1936, besides dispensing gasoline and motor oils, many associations had added to their line automobile tires, tubes, batteries, etc. Many carried a stock of electrical appliances, such as light bulbs, washing machines, toasters, percolators, fans, and radios for cars and homes. Some were adding small supplies of groceries.

Despite the recent growth of petroleum associations, general-store associations were still the most prevalent type of cooperative enterprise in 1936. These associations handled a great variety of goods, including groceries, meats, work clothing, shoes, notions, dry goods, fuel, gasoline and motor oil, tires, farm supplies of all kinds, radios, electrical appliances, refrigerators, and washing machines. Furniture was not generally carried in stock, but could be ordered through the cooperative. In communities where no cooperative petroleum association existed, many store associations dispensed gasoline and motor oil through curb pumps or separate service stations.

Considerable overlapping between store and petroleum cooperatives was revealed by the 1936 data. The 766 store associations, in addition to their 863 stores, 232 warehouses, 155 fuel yards, and 7 bakeries, also operated 191 curb pumps at the stores, 154 separate service stations, and 91 bulk-gasoline stations. In turn, the 736 petroleum associations, in addition to their facilities for dispensing gasoline and oils, were running 139 stores, 183 warehouses, and 38 fuel yards.

The activities of retail cooperatives also covered a wide range of other merchandise and services. Four associations operated bowling alleys, two ran beer taverns, one maintained a beauty parlor, and another conducted a shoe-repair shop. One store association operated a coal mine to supply its members with fuel, and two associations specialized in artists' and teachers' supplies.

Sales. The retail cooperative stores covered by the survey reported sales aggregating nearly $146,200,000 in 1936. Slightly more than one-third of the total volume of business resulted from the sale of petroleum and allied products by gasoline and oil cooperatives. Sales of grocery and meat stores totaled approximately $11,610,000, general merchandise stores $15,700,000, and fuel associations nearly $5,516,000. Cooperative stores handling farm supplies reported sales totaling $35,440,000. Sales of consumers' goods at retail by cooperative marketing associations aggregated $20,360,000.

Over 70 percent of the business of retail cooperatives in 1936 was done in the North Central States. Sales were largest in Minnesota ($19,540,000), Illinois ($15,560,000), and Wisconsin ($14,530,000). In California retail cooperatives reported about $12,050,000 worth of business and four States--Indiana, Nebraska, Kansas,

and Ohio -- had sales ranging from $7,800,000 to slightly less than $10,000,000.

About one-half of the retail cooperatives reported sales ranging from $25,000 to $100,000. Ten associations had sales each of from $500,000 to $1,000,000 and seven did a business of $1,000,000 or over during 1936.

SALES OF RETAIL COOPERATIVES IN 1936

TYPE OF BUSINESS	ASSOCIATIONS REPORTING	AMOUNT OF SALES
All associations	1,802	$146,153,400
Store associations . . .	858	71,027,600
Groceries and meats . .	259	11,612,900
General merchandise . .	194	15,701,200
Students' supplies . .	12	1,884,300
Fuel.	56	5,515,900
Farm supplies	322	35,441,300
Miscellaneous	15	872,100
Buying clubs	79	416,000
Petroleum associations. .	720	50,781,100
Distributive departments of marketing associations	132	20,360,500
Bakeries.	6	595,700
Creameries	4	2,954,100
Water-supply associations	3	18,300

Earnings. The net earnings of the 1,529 reporting cooperatives aggregated $7,520,000 in 1936. This includes a total loss of $117,600 on the year's operations reported by 139 associations.

Petroleum associations accounted for nearly 48 percent ($3,580,000) of the total net earnings. Store associations reported net earnings of nearly $3,000,000 and distributive departments of marketing associations $1,580,000. The largest net earnings for the year were reported in Illinois and were due primarily to the successful operation of petroleum associations.

Patronage Refunds. Nearly one-half of all the retail cooperatives covered by the survey returned some of the year's earnings to their members. Patronage refunds -- based upon the amount of products purchased during the year -- were paid by 851 associations and totaled about $4,920,000. Seventy-five other cooperatives made returns ranging from 1.5 to 17 percent but did not indicate the total amount disbursed.

About 48 percent of the total amount of patronage refunds paid out in 1936 went to members of petroleum associations. Sixty-three percent of these cooperatives made rebates to their members, compared with 38 percent of the store associations. None of the water-supply associations, bakeries, or creameries made any refunds based on patronage. The rates of water cooperatives, however, are set as low as possible and these associations are not expected to yield a returnable surplus.

Among the more important types of cooperatives, average patronage refunds per member during the year amounted to--

$18.13 in general merchandise stores
17.89 in farm-supply associations
13.87 in petroleum associations
12.56 in fuel associations
8.94 in grocery stores

Although the margin of savings in the grocery business is small, some local grocery associations have made an enviable record of savings to their members and a number paid patronage refunds through all the years of the depression.

Membership. The retail associations which reported membership data for 1936 had a combined membership of nearly a half million. About half of the total membership belonged to gasoline and oil associations. Members of store associations made up about 40 percent. What may be termed the typical American consumers' cooperative, from the point of view of membership, has from 100 to 250 members. Approximately one-third of the reporting associations were in this group. Nearly 9 out of every 10 associations had fewer than 500 members. Sixty-two (3.5 percent of the total) each had 1,000 or more members.

The membership of retail cooperative associations includes factory workers, miners, farmers, white-collar workers, professional groups, and

Washington, D.C. Gasoline and Oil Cooperative Photo by Peggy Duffy

students. Among others, reports were received from associations of coal miners in Illinois, Ohio, and Pennsylvania; iron-ore miners in Minnesota and copper miners in Michigan; textile workers in Massachusetts and North Carolina; and railroad workers in Minnesota, North Dakota, and Michigan. The survey also indicated that organized labor was taking an increased interest in consumer cooperatives. In a few cooperatives the membership was composed largely of Negroes.

MEMBERSHIP IN RETAIL COOPERATIVES IN 1936

TYPE OF BUSINESS	ASSOCIATIONS REPORTING	MEMBERS
All associations	1,779	458,500
Store associations	850	185,800
Groceries and meats . . .	256	40,800
General merchandise . . .	199	40,500
Students' supplies . . .	10	18,100
Fuel.	57	8,900
Farm supplies	313	72,300
Miscellaneous	15	5,200
Buying clubs	94	6,600
Petroleum associations . .	691	232,200
Distributive departments of marketing associations.	131	23,500
Bakeries	5	5,300
Creameries	3	4,500
Water-supply associations .	5	600

Most of the buying clubs organized for the purpose of making group purchases on a cooperative basis were located in the large cities, particularly New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. This form of cooperative enterprise has increased considerably in the last 3 or 4 years.

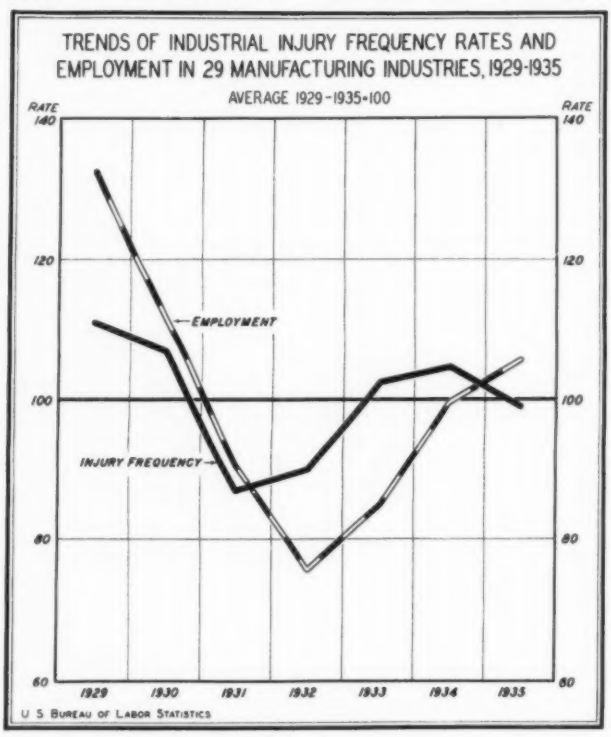
Farmers' retail cooperative organizations outnumbered associations of other occupational groups. Although the interest of farm groups originally centered in the cooperative marketing of their products, they have taken an increasing interest in the cooperative purchase of farm supplies--feed, seed, fertilizers, fencing, machinery, etc. The need of gasoline and oil to operate farm machinery induced farmers to become particularly active in the development of gasoline and oil associations. Cooperative purchases of household supplies, groceries, work clothing, fuel, etc., have also become more widespread in recent years.

Industrial Injuries and Business Conditions

Max D. Kossoris
Bureau of Labor Statistics

More workers are killed and injured through industrial accidents during times of good business than during times of poor business for the simple reason that more workers are employed in times of prosperity. This, however, does not answer the question whether a larger proportion of the workers employed are killed or injured when business is good. Stated simply, the question is: *Out of every 1,000 employed, how many are injured during a year of good business, as against a year of poor business?*

The more accurate way of handling this problem is to measure for every million hours worked the average number of accidental injuries which disable workers beyond the day on which they were hurt. The resulting figure is the frequency rate. This procedure was applied to 29 manufacturing industries for the period from 1929 through 1935, covering a total of about 426,000 disabling injuries. The frequency rates were then compared with the indexes of employment for these industries. The accompanying chart shows the relationship between the frequency rates and the employment indexes for all 29 industries combined.



The chart discloses that as employment decreased during 1930 and 1931, fewer workers were hurt for every million hours worked than in 1929. When employment increased sharply from 1932 to 1933, the frequency of industrial injuries also increased very sharply. But when employment leveled off, the frequency rate of disabling injuries started to drop.

Theoretically, there is no reason why proportionally more or fewer workers should be injured as business conditions change. There is some reason to believe that as production declines, proportionally more accidents should happen for every million hours worked. The reason for this is that as business conditions become worse, employers curtail their expenditures, among them those for safety work. The figures show, however, that as business gets worse, proportionally fewer accidental injuries occur; and as business becomes better, more such injuries occur in manufacturing industries. Why?

The explanation is to be found largely in the safety habits of workers and the kind of equipment used during the various phases of the business cycle. When business turns poor, workers are laid off. Generally those laid off first are those most recently added, and those kept on are workers with long years of service. Often these men are the skilled or semi-skilled whom management wants to have available at all times and around whom a larger force can be built when business picks up. These more

experienced workers are as a rule thoroughly familiar with the hazards of the jobs in the plant and have developed safety habits which are carried from job to job. As a result, fewer workers are injured per million hours worked during years of curtailed employment. But when business improves, men are added to the pay roll. Some of these are persons formerly employed by the company, others are new. These people do not have the steady safety habits of the other smaller force, and as a result have more disabling injuries per million hours worked. Layoffs result in some loss of skill and in the development of worries which detract from safe working habits. Also, newly added employees are likely to be unfamiliar with the accident hazards of their new jobs.

That newly added workers are involved in proportionally more disabling accidents has been demonstrated in several studies, of which the following table based on the experience of a petroleum refining company may serve as an example:

LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT	PERCENT OF TOTAL EMPLOYEES	PERCENT OF TOTAL DISABLING INJURIES
Less than 1 year	15.1	33.0
1 and under 2 years	7.3	11.3
2 and under 3 years	9.4	11.8
3 and under 5 years	19.7	11.8
5 years and over	48.4	31.2

It will be seen that employees with less than 1 year's service, although only 15.1 percent of the total number of employees, had 33 percent of all the disabling injuries in this concern. Similarly, a cement-plant study showed that workers with less than 6 months' experience, although only 3 percent of the total number of employees, had 20 percent of all the disabling injuries. It is clear that such workers must be particularly careful and should be carefully instructed and supervised concerning safe working methods.

The type of equipment used is also an important element in the safety experience of a plant. When orders fall off, management shuts down the less efficient machines and throws production on the most modern equipment, which is usually also the safest equipment. As a result, the relative proportion of disabling injuries is reduced. But when orders come in, the less efficient equipment is put back into operation, and is generally manned by rehired or new workers. The combination of less safe equipment and less safety-minded workers goes far to explain the increase in disabling accidents when business picks up.

After the new or rehired workers have been employed for some time, they too establish safe habits of working, and as a result the frequency rate of disabling accidental injuries drops as they gain more experience.

One more point was brought out in this study: During the depression years there appears to have been a tendency not to report minor injuries which ordinarily would cause workers to stay away from their jobs for 1, 2, or 3 days. It seems that men with such injuries try hard not to lose time, because they cannot afford it. Part-time work and decreased wage rates make it imperative that they earn all they can. Considering that these men are those with long service records, it is not unreasonable to presume that foremen may favor them by giving them work they are able to do until they can return to their regular jobs. This practice, of course, decreases the number of disabling injuries reported and reduces the frequency rate for the industry.

On the other hand, when business conditions improve, production is speeded up, and there is a greater tendency to force workers to take time off when unable to carry on their regular jobs because of some minor injury.

But even if we allow for a failure to report as high as 10 percent of all disabling injuries during the depression years, the general relationship between employment and frequency of disabling injuries persists. It offers a challenge to management properly to train and supervise new or rehired employees so as to minimize the loss of life, limb, and earnings resulting from disabling industrial injuries.

EMPLOYMENT AND PAY ROLLS IN APRIL 1938

Total nonagricultural employment this April increased by approximately 70,000. Ordinarily, however, about 400,000 workers are added to the pay rolls of nonagricultural industries as a result of spring seasonal increases in industrial activity.

The most important increase in employment during the month was in retail trade where approximately 160,000 workers were hired to handle the peak of Easter and spring buying. More workers were also employed in private building construction and quarrying. These increases were partly offset by reductions in factories and mines. Steam railroads laid off about 15,000 men although railroad employment usually increases in April.

Since last autumn when the marked decline in industrial activity began, it is estimated that approximately 3,000,000 workers in nonagricultural industries have lost their jobs.

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

Factory employment declined by about 180,000 as most manufacturing industries continued to curtail their working forces in April. Seventy-one of the 89 manufacturing industries reporting regularly to the Bureau of Labor Statistics had fewer employees in the middle of April than in the middle of March. Seventy industries reported smaller weekly wage payments. The sharp decline of about $5,600,000 in weekly pay rolls was due largely not only to reduced employment, but also to fewer hours of work and wage-rate reductions in a number of industries, chiefly brass, shoes, and cotton.

As in preceding months, the decline in employment was more pronounced in the durable-goods industries. Electrical machinery plants, foundries, and steam-railroad repair shops reported the sharpest reductions. In automobile works and steel mills employment was also reduced although pay rolls showed little change, indicating improved working schedules for those who retained their jobs.

Important nondurable-goods industries which reported marked seasonal decreases in the number of employees were cotton and woolen textiles, men's clothing, and shoes. The decrease in employment in the manufacture of women's clothing was contrary to the usual trend for this time of the year.

Among the 18 manufacturing industries which reported increased employment, substantial gains were recorded in brick and cement, due to increased building activity. Seasonal increases were also reported in agricultural implements and the food industries, especially ice cream and canning factories and beverage plants.

DURABLE-GOODS INDUSTRIES

Employment. About 101,000 fewer workers were employed in manufacturing durable goods in April. Reductions in employment were registered for all groups except stone, clay, and glass. The largest declines over the month interval were 31,000 in machinery manufacturing, 27,000 in transportation equipment, 17,200 in iron, and 13,900 in railroad repair shops.

Compared with April a year ago, approximately 1,240,000 fewer workers had jobs in April of this year. All durable-goods groups were affected by the declines which were distributed as follows:

295,200 in transportation equipment
275,000 in iron and steel
274,500 in machinery manufacturing
143,800 in lumber
104,600 in railroad repair shops
86,500 in nonferrous metals
57,400 in stone, clay, and glass

Weekly Pay Rolls. Workers employed in stone, clay, and glass manufacturing earned as a group about $80,000 per week more in April than in the

ESTIMATED EMPLOYMENT AND PAY ROLLS IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

APRIL 1938, MARCH 1938, and APRIL 1937

INDUSTRY	NUMBER OF WORKERS EMPLOYED			AMOUNT OF WEEKLY PAY ROLL		
	APRIL 1938*	MARCH 1938‡	APRIL 1937	APRIL 1938*	MARCH 1938‡	APRIL 1937
All industries	6,666,400	6,844,800	8,553,000	$143,398,000	$148,961,000	$213,213,000
Durable-goods groups:	3,035,600	3,137,000	4,272,600	70,144,000	72,604,000	121,068,000
Iron and steel	660,600	677,800	935,600	15,165,000	15,313,000	30,699,000
Machinery	826,200	857,200	1,100,700	20,113,000	21,137,000	31,908,000
Transportation equipment	411,400	438,400	706,600	11,137,000	11,361,000	22,137,000
Railroad repair shops	200,600	214,500	305,200	5,764,000	6,171,000	9,141,000
Nonferrous metals	239,900	247,000	326,400	5,086,000	5,438,000	8,370,000
Lumber	498,600	507,700	642,400	8,529,000	8,914,000	12,501,000
Stone, clay, and glass	198,300	194,400	255,700	4,350,000	4,270,000	6,312,000
Nondurable-goods groups:	3,630,800	3,707,800	4,280,400	73,254,000	76,357,000	92,145,000
Textiles	1,401,300	1,456,700	1,790,700	21,666,000	23,630,000	31,739,000
Leather	284,400	291,500	318,000	4,702,000	5,079,000	6,127,000
Foods	670,900	667,400	715,900	15,793,000	15,688,000	16,408,000
Tobacco	81,700	82,100	83,300	1,108,000	1,128,000	1,164,000
Paper and printing	529,000	532,700	569,300	14,047,000	14,360,000	15,579,000
Chemicals	364,700	374,500	419,400	9,632,000	9,894,000	11,303,000
Rubber	97,600	97,900	129,900	2,133,000	2,102,000	3,478,000
Unclassified	201,200	205,000	253,900	4,173,000	4,476,000	6,347,000

* Preliminary ‡ Revised

preceding month. Reduced pay rolls were reported for all other durable-goods groups. The largest decline in weekly wage payments occurred in machinery manufacturing and amounted to slightly more than $1,000,000. For all durable-goods groups combined the net loss in the weekly wage income of the workers employed was estimated at $2,460,000.

Over the year interval, April 1937 to April 1938, weekly wage payments to workers employed in manufacturing durable goods declined nearly $51,000,000. Pay-roll reductions over this period were estimated at $15,530,000 in iron and steel, $11,800,000 in machinery manufacturing, and $11,000,000 in transportation equipment. In the remaining durable-goods groups the reductions were considerably smaller. They amounted to $3,970,000 in lumber, $3,380,000 in railroad repair shops, $3,280,000 in nonferrous metals, and $1,960,000 in stone, clay, and glass.

NONDURABLE-GOODS INDUSTRIES

Employment. The food industries were the only nondurable-goods group which reported an increase in employment in April. All other groups had fewer workers on their pay rolls. The largest reduction (55,400) was in textile manufacturing. In the remaining industries employment declined 9,800 in chemicals, 7,100 in leather, 3,800 in the unclassified industries, 3,700 in paper and printing, and less than 1,000 each in tobacco and rubber manufacturing. These decreases offset the gain in employment in the foods groups and resulted in a net loss of 77,000 for all the nondurable groups of industries combined.

All nondurable-goods groups of industries reported fewer workers on their pay rolls this April than in the same month of last year. Declines in employment over the year interval ranged from

1,600 in tobacco and 32,300 in rubber to 54,700 in chemicals and 389,400 in textiles.

Weekly Pay Rolls. The April weekly wage income of the workers employed in nondurable-goods manufacturing rose $105,000 in foodstuffs and $31,000 in rubber. They declined $1,964,000 in textiles, $377,000 in leather, $313,000 in paper and printing, $303,000 in the unclassified industries, $262,000 in chemicals, and $20,000 in tobacco. As a result the nondurable-goods industries combined paid out in wages approximately $3,100,000 per week less than in the preceding month.

Reductions in weekly wage payments over the year, April 1937 to April 1938, totaled nearly $18,900,000. The wage income of textile workers was $10,070,000 per week smaller this April than in April a year ago. In the other nondurable-goods groups of industries the declines were less marked and varied in amounts from $56,000 in tobacco and $615,000 in foodstuffs to $1,530,000 in paper and printing and $1,670,000 in chemicals.

TREND OF EMPLOYMENT AND PAY ROLLS IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

With the exception of February 1938, factory employment has declined each month since last August. The reduction of 2.6 percent in April brought the Bureau of Labor Statistics employment index to a point 22 percent below the level of April of last year.

Weekly pay rolls declined nearly 4 percent in April and were only about two-thirds as large as in April 1937. The Bureau's pay-roll index was 70.5 in April, 73.3 in March, 104.9 in April 1937, and 100 as the average for the 3 years 1923-25. Thus, for every $1,000 disbursed in weekly wages in 1923-25, factories paid out $705 in April, $733 in March, and $1,049 in April a year ago.

Comparisons with April 1937 show that employment in the durable-goods industries has declined about twice as fast as in the nondurable-goods industries. In the durable-goods group, employment in April was 29 percent below last year and pay rolls were 42 percent smaller. In the nondurable-goods industries, the reduction amounted to about 15 percent in employment and 21 percent in pay rolls.

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

Factory Employment Index

1923-25 = 100

1938	
April.....	79.6*
March.....	81.7
February...	82.2
January....	82.2
1937	
December...	88.5
November...	94.7
October....	100.5
September..	102.1
August.....	102.3
July.....	101.4
June.....	101.1
May.....	102.3
April.....	102.1

* *Preliminary*

HOURS OF WORK AND EARNINGS IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

Weekly hours of work in manufacturing industries declined slightly in April and averaged about 6 hours per week less than in April a year ago. Hourly earnings of factory workers also declined in April but were slightly higher than in April 1937. The weekly wage income of the workers employed was about the same as in March but averaged approximately $3.50 per week less than in April of last year.

Weekly earnings:

$28.80 in automobiles
24.45 in foundries and machine shops
22.90 in blast furnaces and rolling mills
19.15 in sawmills
17.90 in brick manufacturing

Average weekly hours of work and average hourly and weekly earnings in the five selected nondurable-goods industries in April 1938 were—

HOURS OF WORK AND EARNINGS IN INDUSTRIES MANUFACTURING CHEMICALS AND ALLIED PRODUCTS

INDUSTRY	HOURS OF WORK			HOURLY EARNINGS			WEEKLY EARNINGS		
	APRIL 1938	INCREASE OR DECREASE		APRIL 1938	INCREASE OR DECREASE		APRIL 1938	INCREASE OR DECREASE	
		MAR. 1938 TO APR. 1938	APR. 1937 TO APR. 1938		MAR. 1938 TO APR. 1938	APR. 1937 TO APR. 1938		MAR. 1938 TO APR. 1938	APR. 1937 TO APR. 1938
		Percent	*Percent*	*Cents*	*Percent*	*Percent*		*Percent*	*Percent*
Chemicals	37.0	+ 0.4	- 9.4	79.5	+ 0.6	+ 5.9	$29.55	+ 1.0	- 4.1
Cottonseed--oil, cake, meal	48.5	- 3.2	- 6.0	25.5	+ 0.1	+ 7.1	12.25	- 3.5	+ 1.2
Druggists' preparations	37.5	- 0.8	- 5.3	60.0	+ 1.1	+ 6.8	23.90	*No change*	+ 2.5
Explosives	35.0	- 2.8	-16.2	81.0	- 0.8	+ 3.2	28.30	- 3.6	-13.6
Fertilizers	40.5	- 1.2	-10.2	40.5	+ 5.0	+10.8	16.35	+ 3.7	- 1.2
Paints and varnishes	39.5	+ 3.0	- 8.6	69.0	- 0.5	+ 5.1	27.10	+ 2.4	- 3.7
Petroleum refining	36.0	- 0.7	- 0.8	97.0	- 0.2	+ 2.0	34.55	- 0.9	+ 1.4
Rayon and allied products	32.5	- 4.9	-17.9	65.0	+ 0.5	+ 8.8	21.20	- 4.4	-11.0
Soap	38.5	- 1.5	- 3.6	75.0	+ 0.7	+10.9	28.55	- 0.6	- 6.9

In the five selected durable-goods industries the average weekly hours of work and average hourly and weekly earnings in April 1938 were—

Weekly hours:

37.0 in sawmills
34.5 in brick manufacturing
34.5 in foundries and machine shops
31.5 in automobiles
27.5 in blast furnaces and rolling mills

Hourly earnings (in cents):

92.0 in automobiles
83.0 in blast furnaces and rolling mills
71.0 in foundries and machine shops
53.0 in sawmills
51.5 in brick manufacturing

Weekly hours:

40.0 in slaughtering and meat packing
37.5 in paper and pulp
36.0 in petroleum refining
31.0 in cotton-goods manufacturing
26.5 in tires and inner tubes

Hourly earnings (in cents):

97.0 in petroleum refining
94.5 in tires and inner tubes
69.0 in slaughtering and meat packing
62.0 in paper and pulp
41.0 in cotton-goods manufacturing

Weekly earnings:

$34.55 in petroleum refining
27.75 in slaughtering and meat packing
25.20 in tires and inner tubes
23.15 in paper and pulp
12.80 in cotton-goods manufacturing

With the exception of blast furnaces and rolling mills and cotton-goods manufacturing, all selected durable- and nondurable-goods industries averaged higher hourly earnings in April 1938 than in April 1937. Hourly earnings were 7 percent higher in paper and pulp, 6 percent in foundries and machine shops, and about 4 percent higher in sawmills and automobiles.

Average weekly earnings in April of this year were considerably lower than in April a year ago. The largest declines in the weekly wage income of the workers employed were 36 percent in blast furnaces and rolling mills, 22 percent in rubber tires and inner tubes, 20 percent in foundries and machine shops, 20 percent in cotton-goods manufacturing, and 18 percent in brick manufacturing.

EMPLOYMENT, PAY ROLLS, WAGES, AND HOURS IN SELECTED NONMANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

	APRIL 1938*	INCREASE OR DECREASE: MARCH 1938 TO APRIL 1938	INCREASE OR DECREASE: APRIL 1937 TO APRIL 1938
RETAIL TRADE		*Percent*	*Percent*
Employment.....	3,451,400	+ 6.1	- 0.8
Weekly pay roll...	$66,264,000	+ 5.2	+ 0.4
Weekly hours.....	42.5	- 0.2	- 1.5
Hourly earnings...	$0.55	- 0.2	+ 4.1
Weekly earnings...	$21.45	- 0.9	+ 1.4
WHOLESALE TRADE			
Employment.....	1,420,400	- 0.7	- 3.7
Weekly pay roll...	$43,184,000	- 0.1	- 1.1
Weekly hours.....	42.5	+ 0.7	- 1.7
Hourly earnings...	$0.70	+ 0.4	+ 4.2
Weekly earnings...	$29.60	+ 0.6	+ 2.7
METAL MINING			
Employment.....	67,400	- 1.2	-19.6
Weekly pay roll...	$1,751,000	- 5.3	-30.5
Weekly hours.....	40.0	- 3.7	- 7.3
Hourly earnings...	$0.68	- 0.5	- 6.6
Weekly earnings...	$27.00	- 4.1	-13.5
BITUMINOUS COAL			
Employment.....	393,100	- 8.0	- 4.5
Weekly pay roll...	$6,190,000	-18.1	-11.9
Weekly hours.....	20.0	-11.2	- 8.6
Hourly earnings...	$0.87	+ 0.1	- 1.2
Weekly earnings...	$17.35	-11.0	- 7.8
TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH			
Employment.....	400,900	- 0.1	- 2.4
Weekly pay roll...	$13,245,000	- 1.1	+ 6.2
Weekly hours.....	39.5	+ 1.0	+ 0.6
Hourly earnings...	$0.84	- 1.6	+ 7.6
Weekly earnings...	$31.30	- 0.9	+ 8.7

	APRIL 1938*	INCREASE OR DECREASE: MARCH 1938 TO APRIL 1938	INCREASE OR DECREASE: APRIL 1937 TO APRIL 1938
HOTELS		*Percent*	*Percent*
Employment.....	272,800	*No change*	- 2.7
Weekly pay roll...	$3,992,000	- 0.5	- 0.2
Weekly hours.....	47.0	- 1.0	- 3.6
Hourly earnings...	$0.32	+ 0.8	+ 5.0
Weekly earnings...	$14.85	- 0.6	+ 2.6
POWER and LIGHT			
Employment.....	293,800	- 0.2	- 1.4
Weekly pay roll...	$9,268,000	- 1.1	+ 2.1
Weekly hours.....	40.0	- 1.0	- 2.8
Hourly earnings...	$0.84	+ 0.1	+ 6.6
Weekly earnings...	$33.45	- 0.9	+ 3.6
ELECTRIC RAILROADS			
Employment.....	189,800	+ 0.4	- 2.4
Weekly pay roll...	$5,986,000	+ 0.2	+ 1.0
Weekly hours.....	45.0	- 0.5	- 2.8
Hourly earnings...	$0.70	*No change*	+ 6.8
Weekly earnings...	$32.20	- 0.2	+ 3.5
LAUNDRIES			
Employment.....	220,200	+ 0.5	- 3.0
Weekly pay roll...	$3,513,000	+ 2.6	+ 0.4
Weekly hours.....	42.0	+ 0.8	- 2.6
Hourly earnings...	$0.41	+ 1.2	+ 6.8
Weekly earnings...	$17.25	+ 2.1	+ 3.5
DYEING & CLEANING			
Employment.....	65,500	+13.5	+ 2.4
Weekly pay roll...	$1,259,000	+27.9	+ 8.9
Weekly hours.....	44.0	+ 9.4	- 0.9
Hourly earnings...	$0.49	+ 3.1	+ 7.7
Weekly earnings...	$21.60	+12.6	+ 6.3

* *Preliminary*

Business and Economic Conditions in April 1938

AGRICULTURE

Farm Income. The April cash income of farmers from the sale of farm products was estimated by the Department of Agriculture at $489,000,000--$23,000,000 less than in the preceding month and $94,000,000 less than in April 1937. Government payments to farmers in April amounted to approximately $60,000,000. This was about the same as in March but $3,000,000 less than in April a year ago.

1937 Cotton Sales. Despite the largest cotton crop on record, farm income from the sale of cotton and cottonseed last year was about $41,000,000 smaller than in 1936. Farm sales of cotton and cottonseed were estimated by the Department of Agriculture at $864,000,000 in 1937, as against nearly $905,000,000 in the preceding year, and $461,000,000 in 1932, when the income from farm sales of cotton reached the lowest point on record.

INDUSTRY AND TRADE

After remaining at about the same level since the beginning of the year the Federal Reserve Board's index of industrial production declined slightly in April. With allowances for usual seasonal changes in the output of factories and mines, the index was 77 in April, as against 79 in the 2 preceding months, and 80 in January.

The April decline in the index of industrial production was due chiefly to reduced activities in cotton textiles and lumber. Other important industries, such as steel and automobiles, operated at about the same rate as in the preceding month. Department-store sales continued to be smaller than usual for this time of the year.

FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD

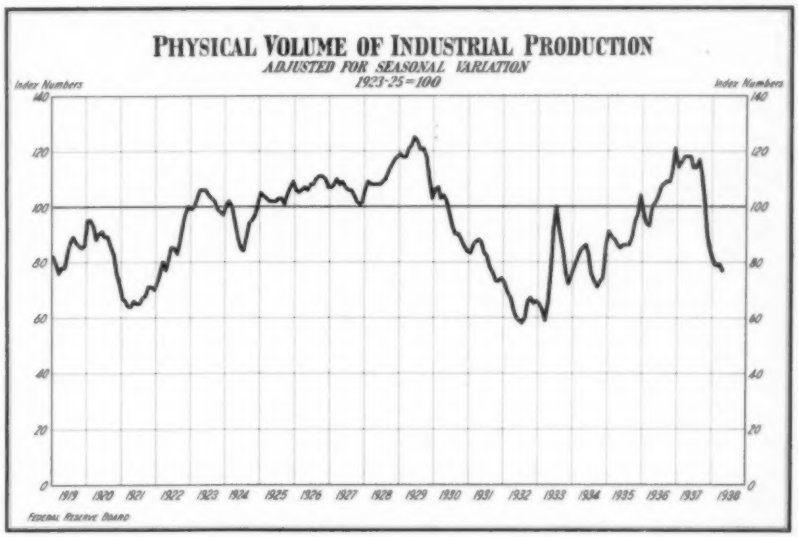
Industrial Production

ADJUSTED INDEX

1923-25 = 100

1938	
April.....	77*
March.....	79
February...	79
January....	80
1937	
December...	84
November...	89
October....	103
September..	111
August.....	117
July.....	114
June.....	114
May.....	118
April.....	118

* *Preliminary*



Automobiles. Output of automobiles in April was less than half as large as in April 1937. Approximately 219,300 passenger cars and trucks were assembled this April, as against 222,000 in March and 536,100 in April a year ago.

Bituminous Coal. Preliminary estimates indicate a bituminous coal output of about 22,200,000 tons in April. This compares with 26,745,000 tons in March and 26,040,000 tons in April 1937.

Building Construction. April permits for building construction in 2,025 cities totaled $136,240,000, compared with $120,750,000 in March. The value of permits issued this April was 24 percent smaller than in April of last year.

Electric Power. About 8,660 million kilowatt hours of electricity were produced in April. In the preceding month output totaled 9,185 million kilowatt hours and in April a year ago 9,609 million kilowatt hours.

Railroad Freight Car Loadings. Class I railroads loaded on the average 530,000 cars of freight per week in April--25,700 cars per week less than in the preceding month and 212,600 cars per week less than in April 1937.

Steel. Output of steel ingots declined slightly in April. Total ingot production of 1,925,000 tons compared with 2,011,000 tons in March and 5,070,000 tons in April a year ago.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT AND RELIEF IN APRIL 1938

Employment in the Federal Service. About 1,164,000 persons were employed in the Federal Government service in April. Nearly 728,000 workers (other than force-account, supervisory, and technical employees) had jobs in the executive branch of the Government, 330,400 in the military, 5,170 in the legislative, and 2,100 in the judicial service.

P.W.A. Construction Projects. An increase of approximately 10,400 workers in April brought the volume of employment at the site of P.W.A. construction projects to 104,100. Pay rolls for the month totaled $8,190,000, compared with $6,990,000 in March.

Other Federal Government Construction Projects. Nearly 176,800 workers earned $18,014,000 in wages in April on projects financed by regular appropriations and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. In March 160,200 persons were employed at a total pay roll of $15,660,000.

The Works Program. Projects financed by the Works Progress Administration other than emergency conservation work, student aid, and that part of P.W.A. work financed by The Works Program provided work to 2,928,000 persons in April. Their wages for the month aggregated $143,200,000.

Emergency Conservation Work. Employment of enrolled workers, camp supervisors, and instructors in the Civilian Conservation Corps totaled nearly 308,000 in April, compared with 315,800 in March. Their total wage income aggregated $14,360,000 in April, as against $14,580,000 in the preceding month.

General Relief. Preliminary reports to the Social Security Board from 101 urban areas indicate that about 773,200 families and single persons received about $21,300,000 in relief in April. About 6 percent fewer cases were handled in these cities than in the preceding month and the amount of funds disbursed declined 10 percent.

What Happened to Prices in April 1938

Wholesale Prices. The Bureau of Labor Statistics index of wholesale commodity prices averaged slightly lower in April than in the preceding month. It was nearly 11 percent lower than in April of last year. The index, based on 1926 as 100, was 78.7 in April, 79.7 in March, and 88.0 in April 1937. This means that the same commodities which cost $100 at wholesale in 1926 could be bought for $78.70 in April, as against $79.70 in March, and $88 in April a year ago.

INDEX OF WHOLESALE PRICES

ITEM	1926	APRIL 1938	APRIL 1937	INCREASE (+) OR DECREASE (-) APRIL 1937 TO APRIL 1938
	Index	*Index*	*Index*	*Percent*
All commodities	100	78.7	88.0	-10.6
Farm products	100	68.4	92.2	-25.8
Raw materials	100	71.3	88.7	-19.6
Semimanufactured articles	100	75.3	89.5	-15.9
Finished products	100	82.7	87.4	- 5.4

Retail Food Prices. Average retail food prices for the country as a whole rose slightly in April but were nearly 5 percent lower than in April 1937. The index of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which includes 84 separate retail food quotations was 73.2 in April, compared with 72.4 in the preceding month, 78.9 in April 1937, and 100 as the average for 1926. In other words, for every dollar's worth of foodstuffs purchased at retail in 1926, consumers paid on the average 73.2 cents in April, 72.4 cents in March, and 78.9 cents in April of last year.

AVERAGE RETAIL FOOD PRICES FOR THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE

ITEM	RETAIL PRICE		INCREASE (+) OR DECREASE (-) APRIL 1937 TO APRIL 1938	
	APRIL 1938	APRIL 1937		
	Cents	*Cents*	*Cents*	*Percent*
Bread, pound	8.9	8.6	+ 0.3	+ 3.3
Butter, pound	35.6	39.7	- 4.1	- 9.6
Milk, delivered, quart	12.6	12.3	+ 0.3	+ 2.0
Eggs, dozen	29.0	33.7	- 4.7	-12.1
Potatoes, pound	2.4	3.7	- 1.3	-33.7
Lard, pound	13.1	17.4	- 4.3	-23.8
Pork chops, pound	33.3	34.4	- 1.1	- 3.6
Round steak, pound	33.9	37.1	- 3.2	- 9.2
Sugar, pound	5.4	5.7	- 0.3	- 4.7
Coffee, pound	23.4	25.3	- 1.9	- 8.2

Published under authority of Public Resolution No. 57, approved May 11, 1922 (42 Stat. 541), as amended by section 307 Public Act 212, approved June 30, 1932 (47 Stat. 409). This publication approved by the Director, Bureau of the Budget, September 18, 1934, as amended February 18, 1935.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1938